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**NSC BRIEFING**

**16 April 1969**

**CURRENT IRAQI DEVELOPMENTS**

- I. The government's campaign to rid Iraq of Western "imperialist" influences is moving forward rapidly.
  - A. The British are in process of evacuating Babbaniya airbase. All dependents now gone.
  - B. The Western-owned Iraq Petroleum Company has been subjected to considerable harassment, which may develop into "piecemeal" nationalization of the company.
    1. The first contingent of Soviet technicians has arrived at the small government-owned, but American operated, Basra refinery, and the government is continuing its effective measures to squeeze Western technicians out of Iraq.
  - C. American Embassy officials are being subjected to new "security controls" and recurrent surveillance; several Iraqis employed by the embassy have been arrested and on 14 April an American education technician working in the US aid mission was arrested and subsequently expelled from the country apparently on the charge that he was a "spy and saboteur."
- II. In a 14 April speech to a Baghdad rally of the Communist-front Peace Partisans, which included delegations from practically all the bloc countries, Qasim aligned himself with the "democratic forces" representing the "main trend" in the country. He warned against "dissident and reactionary" elements, echoing his earlier warning to Baghdad army groups on the danger stemming from "poisons of division" among military personnel.

- III. A shake-up may be in process in the Iraqi cabinet to increase the proportion of Communist representation.
- A. Until now most of the cabinet posts have been held by non-Communists--generally adherents of the National Democratic (socialist) party.
  - B. Now, however, the anti-Communist Minister of Guidance has been transferred to an ambassadorial post, replacement of several other ministers is reported likely and five new specialized economic ministries are being created.
  - C. There are strong rumors in Baghdad that Communists are to get some of these positions. In addition, new purges of anti-Communists are reported this week in the Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Social Affairs.
- IV. The UAR is maintaining pressure on Qasbi's regime through direct propaganda attacks, through the "Voice of Free Iraq" which it set up on Egyptian territory in early April, through attempts to subvert Iraqi nationalists abroad, and through its withdrawal of UAR technicians and teachers.
- A. The UAR is also furnishing arms and training to Shanwar tribesmen in Northeastern Syria who have already staged a number of harassing attacks on Iraqi border posts.
    1. Baghdad is concerned that regular UAR military units will be moved up to support the tribesmen and believes that Syrian fedayeen may have infiltrated in an attempt to blow up Iraqi oil pipelines.

8. Iraqi security patrols have also been involved in minor brushes with dissident tribal elements near the Iranian border.
9. Some Kurds--over 500--have been repatriated to Iraq from the USSR. IRA propaganda claims these are to form a "foreign legion," but there is no real evidence to support this. Kurds, abetted by Soviet agents, are of course a potential pressure group which could act in Soviet interest.

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